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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO.
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EXAMINER

1992170202

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HOUSTON TX 77210

PROLATE UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1723

DATE MAILED:

02/02/99

This is a communication from the examiner in charge of your application.
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

OFFICE ACTION SUMMARY

☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 6-9-1998 and 9-8-1998

☐ This action is FINAL.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 D.C. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 16-32 is/are pending in the application.
Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
☒ Claim(s) 16-32 is/are rejected.
☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

- ☒ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.
☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.
☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.
☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).
☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
☐ received.
☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____
☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

- ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of Reference Cited, PTO-892
☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). 4 (9 Sheets)
☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413
☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948
☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES--

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DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. This application has been filed with informal drawings which are acceptable for examination purposes only. Formal drawings will be required when the application is allowed.

Double Patenting

2. Claims 31 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1 and 10, respectfully of prior U.S. Patent No. 5,811,142. This is a double patenting rejection.

3. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

4. Claims 16-27 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-15 of U.S. Patent No. 5,811,142. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because they

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substantially differ only in text concerning removal of oxygen from the outer compartment surrounding a compartment containing a retail cut of raw meat , and are considered as including the same combination of limitations concerning packaging of raw meats to maintain an oxygen-free environment .

Allowable Subject Matter

5. Claims 16-32 would be deemed to distinguish over the prior art, apart from the double patenting rejection, in view of the affidavit swearing behind the Breen et al patents of record in parent application 08/763,719 and are deemed to distinguish over the Hayhurst et al patents in view of respective recitations of the meat containing compartment or package either being encompassed by an outer wall having a portion that is nonpermeable to oxygen or substantially totally enclosed by such package .


6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Venkateshwaran et al patent 5,744,056 is made of record for recitation of an oxygen scavenger combined with an activator useable for preserving meat packages for long periods in packages.

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph W. Drodge whose telephone number is (703) 308-0403. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from approximately 8:30 AM - 4:45 PM.

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The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-3599. When filing a FAX in Tech Center 1700, please indicate in the Header (upper right) "Official" for papers that are to be entered into the file, and "Unofficial" for draft documents and other communication with the PTO that are not for entry into the file of the application. This will expedite processing of your papers.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.


Joseph W. Drodge
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1723

JWD
January 28, 1999